

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OUAGAD 03667 181029Z
ACTION INR-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 /033 W
-----024022 190621Z /11

R 180952Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
TO AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7936
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L OUAGADOUGOU 3667

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR, UR
SUBJECT: BIO: AMBASSADOR VLADIMIR STEPANOVICH TIKOUNOV

1.FOLLOWING ARE EMBASSY OBSERVATIONS ON VLADIMIR
TIKOUNOV WHO HAS BEEN SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO UPPER VOLTA
SINCE APRIL 1974 AND IS NOW BEING REASSIGNED TO YAOUNDE:

2. TIKOUNOV STRIKES US AS THE STEREOTYPE OF THE KHRUSCHEV
ERA SOVIET BUREAUCRAT. WHILE HIS APPEARANCE IS FLACCID,
OVERWEIGHT AND ILL-TAILORED, IT IS EVIDENT THAT HE IS
INTELLIGENT, CANNY, AND A STRONG LEADER OF HIS MISSION.
TIKOUNOV HAS NOT BEEN EFFECTIVE IN WHAT WE SUSPECT HAS
BEEN CLOSE TO POLITICAL EXILE FOR HIM IN THIS
SAHELIAN CAPITAL. SOVIET-VOLTAN RELATIONS ARE ONLY
PERFUNCTORY. WHILE THE SOVIET MISSION IS LARGE
(PERHAPS 40 SOVIET PERSONNEL), THEIR PROGRAMS ARE
LIMITED TO A LIGHTLY USED CULTURAL CENTER AND A SCHOLARSHIP
PROGRAM. VOLTAN STUDENTS RETURNING FROM STUDIES IN
THE USSR HAVE DIFFICULTY OBTAINING GOOD POSITIONS IN
THE VOLTAN GOVERNMENT.

3. TIKOUNOV IS EITHER UNABLE OR REFUSES TO SPEAK ANY-
THING OTHER THAN RUSSIAN. WHEN DEALING WITH NON-SOVIETS
HE ALWAYS HAS AN INTERPRETER AT HIS SIDE. TIKOUNOV
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PAGE 02 OUAGAD 03667 181029Z

HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO DEVELOP A WARM EFFECTIVE RELATION-
SHIP WITH THE VOLTAN LEADERSHIP. HE REPORTEDLY
OFFENDED THE DEVOUTLY MOSLEM VOLTAN PRESIDENT BY
PRESENTING HIM WITH A CASE OF VODKA AS A BIRTHDAY
PRESENT. ON ANOTHER OCCASION, DESPITE THE AMBASSADOR'S
INTERVENTION, THE VOLTAN GOVERNMENT REFUSED TO HOST
THE MOSCOW CIRCUS AT THE OUAGADOUGOU MUNICIPAL

AUDITORIUM. THE CIRCUS WAS FORCED TO PERFORM AT THE
AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE.

4. DURING HIS UPPER VOLTA STAY, AMBASSADOR TIKOUNOV
HAS RELIED HEAVILY ON QUOTE COMMERICAL ATTACHE UNQUOTE,
DMITRITY SAENKO. SAENKO IS BRIGHT, GREGARIOUS AND
VERY CAPABLE AND APPEARS TO HAVE A NETWORK OF AFRICAN
ASSOCIATES BOTH IN UPPER VOLTA AND IN NEIGHBORING
WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES. FYI: VOLTAN-SOVIET TRADE IS
VIRTUALLY NON-EXISTENT SO WE SUSPECT SAENKO'S
COMMERCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES ARE LIGHT. END FYI.

5. ADDITIONAL INFO ON TIKOUNOV

A. BORN 1921

B. LAW DEGREE- ALMA ATA 1942

C. BRIGADIER GENERAL (INFANTRY) IN RED ARMY (REPORTEDLY)

D. MINISTER (OR SENIOR OFFICIAL) OF INTERIOR OF RUSSIAN
SOVIET REPUBLIC

E. USSR EMBASSY RUMANIA 1969-1974

F. AMBASSADOR, AEP TO UPPER VOLTA 1974-1978. KILLION

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, AMBASSADORS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978OUAGAD03667
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780339-0815
Format: TEL
From: OUAGADOUGOU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780849/aaaaboho.tel
Line Count: 82
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 1261e360-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION INR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1695001
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BIO: AMBASSADOR VLADIMIR STEPANOVICH TIKOUNOV
TAGS: PINR, UR, UV, CM, (TIKOUNOV, VLADIMIR STEPANOVICH)
To: YAOUNDE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/1261e360-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014